

What did the Israelites do? They "murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?"

What did Moses do? "He cried unto the Lord" for direction and help.

What did the Lord do? He revealed to Moses and through him to the people that years and years before he had made provision for the sweetening of these waters. "The Lord showed him a tree which, when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet." God not only had prepared that tree years before but He had watched over it that it should not die for want of rain and that it should not be cut down or injured by any passer-by, and that it should be ready for the Israelites. For years God had been anticipating their necessity and had been providing for it.

God's covenant with us is the same as His covenant with Israel. His promises to us are just as sure, and when our hour of disappointment or discouragement shall come we may feel sure that it has not taken God by surprise but that he has provided for the event in advance.

But God had provided in advance for Israel something more and better than water. He was starting His people out on a journey to the Land of Canaan. It was important that at the start they should learn a lesson concerning the care which He would exercise in their behalf through all their wanderings. Could he have devised a better lesson on this subject than this? The experience revealed at once the shortsightedness and the complaining disposition of man and the thoughtfulness of God and His mercy to His people.

It was a lesson on the folly of murmuring. Did the murmuring tend to sweeten the waters? Did it not rather make the people less fitted to enjoy the gifts which God was bestowing upon them? In days that followed was the memory of that murmuring a sweet retrospect? Did the murmuring influence God to bestir himself on their behalf? Would that we might learn this lesson and forbear finding fault with God.

Had it been a man and not God who was the giver in this instance would not the murmuring have tended to restrain rather than to increase his love for the people? In the fact that God instead of chastising the people immediately sweetened the waters, we have an evidence of God's love to the unworthy and the undeserving. Has He not dealt even thus with us?

We seem to hear the reader say, that "If God would once give me such a sweet correction I would surely not murmur again." So we fancy. Perhaps the children of Israel indulged in some such good resolutions. But turn to the next chapter and note that it describes what occurred within about a fortnight and when the bread was exhausted, lo! the people are murmuring again. Their good resolutions lasted only a fortnight.

God sweetened the waters. But he required the people to do what they could and to do it in faith. He waited until the young men plied the axe and cut down the tree and cast it into the spring. God does His part; he waits for us to do our part.

The risen Christ is a pledge of the rising of those who are united to Him. "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

Devotional and Selections

A VISIT TO THE PHILIPPINES.

By Minot C. Morgan.

We reached Manila just at sunrise, and what a picture it was, as the morning haze hung like a luminous gauze veil over the steamers and launches and craft of every sort, some lying quietly at anchor and others of a smaller breed gliding about between them.

Our visit in Manila was made peculiarly delightful and instructive as well, because of the number of Americans and Filipinos in different walks of life with whom we could discuss the "Philippine question." One day the Rev. Dr. James B. Rodgers, of our mission, the first Protestant missionary to preach in the Philippines, took us out into the country, so that we might have a true conception of life outside of Manila. On the boat for Cavite we met Captain Sears of the "Concord," the only war vessel with the fleet that was in the fight with the Spaniards ten years ago. From Cavite there followed a ride in a diminutive and uncomfortable little two-wheeled cab to a chapel of our Board, one of the many under Dr. Rodgers' supervision. It is built of nipa, as are most of the native houses, and rejoices in the solitary distinction of being lit with electric lights, through its nearness to Cavite. Here a little company of Christians meet for worship and instruction and Bible study, Sabbath by Sabbath, under the leadership of an elder.

Our next mode of conveyance was a banca, an amusing-looking little craft, but surprisingly speedy. It is a dugout with a couple of hollow bamboo logs fastened on outriggers on each side five or six feet from the boat itself. The one on the leeward side lies in the water and acts as a float. The one on the windward side is up in the air and serves for ballast, especially when a boy climbs out on it.

After our banca ride came another ride in a Spanish cart to a river, then across the river in a ferry-boat just big enough to hold the pony and cart and the man who pulled the boat across the stream on a wire rope.

Safely across, our driver whipped up our steed and we jogged along a particularly charming road—the river on one side, tropical foliage, luxuriant and varied on both sides, and here and there picturesque nipa houses. The nipa, by the way, when it is growing, looks like a dwarf palm, and makes an excellent thatch. A nipa house would not do for a cool country, but for the tropics it is certainly the ideal thing—light, airy, cool, picturesque.

At last we reached the village (or barrio as I believe they call it) of Imus, where we spent the major part of a charmingly novel and interesting day.

Our host was a Mr. Behrends, an American, who is Commissioner of Lands for the United States Government. He is in effect the landlord of tens of thousands of acres of land formerly owned by the Friars, and bought, you will remember, by our Government, a very wise and efficient way of solving an exceedingly knotty problem.

We had lunch at the army mess, for Imus is now an army post for several regiments of Filipino scouts,